Instagram and the Ethics of Privacy

Case Study

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**Instagram From 0 to $1 Billion in Two Years!**

Instagram considers itself as a big fun way to share image with friends. By downloading the free Instagram mobile application, Users snap images with cell phones and then select from more than a dozen filters to give the images a special look. They have caption and their place, and share with friends on social networking websites such as twitter, Facebook, tumblr and Flicker.

Instagram was created by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger and launched in October 2010. After lunching, Systrom and Krieger didn’t know exactly what to expect, but 25,000 users showed up on the first day! Instagram hit one million users in three months. By 2010 December, Instagram had 1.5 million registered users. In June 2011 Instagram released 5 million users announcement, passing 10 million in 2010 September. And now, It is one of the biggest social networks with more than 40 million sign up users. The amount of daily user is very high, the images generate more than 600 likes per second and more than 85 comments per second.

In its largest acquisition deal to date, Facebook made an offer to purchase Instagram (with its 13 employees) for approximately $1 billion in cash and stock in April 2012 with plans to keep the service independently managed. "It's important to be clear that Instagram is not going away," Instagram CEO Kevin Systrom wrote on his company blog. "We'll be working with Facebook to evolve Instagram and build the network. We'll continue to add new features to the product and find new ways to create a better mobile photos experience."

On December 2011, Apple names Instagram: “iPhone App of the year”

**Instagram users were upset!**

In January 16, after Instagram was bought by Facebook, they change their "term of use" which made a huge reaction from their users because the modification done for the users rights section. They said "A business or other entity may pay" means that a company may buy your photos from Instagram and they said "in connection with paid or sponsored content or promotions, without any compensation to you."

In result, many Instagram's users delete their accounts so Instagram won't sell their photos.
Instagram says it won't sell your photos to advertisers

Many users expressed outrage. Instagram had a sharp drop in its user numbers, cost it 25 percent of its "daily active users" over Christmas weekend, Instagram on Thursday released an updated data set claiming those numbers were half-baked. However the New York Post reported that the photo-sharing service dropped from 16.4 million daily active users to 12.4 million in the course of four days, the new Instagram statistics says the app has 90 million monthly active users. Instagram also said that those 90 million people post 40 million photos per day, tap 8,500 likes per second and write 1,000 Comments per Second.

A class action lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California on December 21, 2012, which accused Instagram of violating the property rights of its users and breaching its existing terms of service.

The class action lawsuit seeks to preserve valuable and important property, statutory, and legal rights, through injunctive, declaratory and equitable relief before such claims are forever barred by adoption of Instagram’s New Terms.

As a result, a few days later after Instagram again revised the Terms of Service announcing that it would withdraw some of the proposed changes. It backed off a plan to use the names, images, and photos of users for advertising purposes by deleting language about displaying photos without compensation.

On February 13, 2013, Instagram asked the federal court to dismiss the class action lawsuit filed over changes to Instagram’s Terms of Service. Instagram argued that the plaintiff, Lucy Funes, had no right to bring her claim because she could have deleted her Instagram account before the changes in the Terms of Service went into effect on January 19, 2013. Instagram also disputed Funes' claims that the new terms required her to transfer rights in her photos to the company.

Some of the users reply to Instagram’s action:

**John Doser** said: ““To be clear: It is not our intention to sell your photos,” the company said.”We are working on updated language in the terms to make sure this is clear."

Unless that 'language' includes "We will not share users' photos with third-party companies or partners for compensation" I'm not sure how their improved version is going to protect anything.

They knew what they were doing the first time around. First you make a drastic change that people hate, then you 'clarify' the change so that you can still do the same thing, but people choose the lesser of two evils and keep using the service.
That, or they really were just complete idiots and thought nobody would notice the whole "Oh, by the way, we can totally sell your personal photos and not pay you any money" change.

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Kennesha Walker Said: “I can say that I have already deleted my account because of the foolishness. Regardless of HOW you worded it, I find it a bit lazy that Instagram couldn't get it right the first time. I TOTALLY agree with what John Doser (below) has stated. Really so stating that you can use my images to all third parties for advertisement was going to fly, please. You knew better. One less account holder to deal with. Just shows the business ethics of the company. Pretty sad.”

Jason said “People need to stop complaining. It's a public domain. Don't like it delete your Facebook as well. Plus why do you even like a business on Instagram? Your fault you are posting pictures of yourself on Instagram.”
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